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Tom Lea's depiction of a gunner scanning for enemy warplanes.

FEATURES

8 This Little Piggy When pet potbellies outgrow expectations, rescuers step in.

Story by Chris Burrows | Photos by Eric W. Pohl

12 Tom Lea's War El Paso artist's battlefield paintings express the tragedy and pathos of World War II.

By E. Dan Klepper

FAVORITES

5 Letters

6 Currents

18 Local Co-op News

Get the latest information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative.

29 Texas History

Baylor, the Man

By Martha Deeringer

31 Retro Recipes

Layer Cakes

35 Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: On the Ranch

36 Around Texas

List of Local Events

38 Hit the Road

Higher Education

By Chet Garner

ONLINE

TexasCoopPower.com

Find these stories online if they don't appear in your edition of the magazine.

Texas USA

Instant Archives

By Light T. Cummins

Observations

Russian Interference

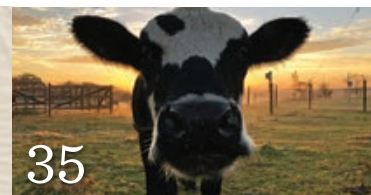
By E. Dan Klepper

NEXT MONTH

Drive In, Chill Out Drive-in theaters, long past their heyday, remain as beacons of nostalgia.



TOM LEA ART: COURTESY TEXAS A&M PRESS



ON THE COVER Lil Kevin, a rescued potbelly, plods the grounds of his forever home, at Oinkin' Oasis in Gilmer. Photo by Eric W. Pohl

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Other Blues Artists

The story [*Texas: A Blues State*, March 2019] would have been even better had it included Joe Tex (*Hold What You've Got*) and Joe Simon (*The Chokin' Kind*), notable blues and soul artists who performed in the Dallas area for years.

R.H. GRUY | GRANBURY
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Under the Green Flag

There was a mix-up on the historical details explaining our event Under the Green Flag [*A Chapter in La Bahia's History*, Currents, February 2019]. Mexico was fighting to win its independence from Spain, not to free Texas from Spanish rule.

Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara and Augustus William Magee were fighting to wrest Texas from Spanish rule with an idea of making it an independent country separate and apart from Spain or Mexico. The army they led was made up of Americans, Tejanos and Indians along with a handful of Spanish deserters.

SCOTT MCMAHON, DIRECTOR
PRESIDIO LA BAHIA

Raised in a Dance Hall

I was almost brought to tears when I saw *Hail the Halls* [February 2019]. I was raised in our local dance hall in Cypress—Cypress Gun and Rifle Club, aka Tin Hall. My dad remembered going there as a child with his dad in a horse and buggy. It was a huge two-story structure where people could meet and eat homemade pie downstairs while the two-steppin' went on upstairs on their immense wooden dance floor.

I slept on those chairs as a

Long Live Texas Blues

I had so much fun reading about Texas blues artists [*Texas: A Blues State*, March 2019]. Every time I came to a name, I would type it into YouTube and listen to the artist's music. It really brought the article to life. Some of those early recordings were pretty rough and scratchy. Lightnin' Hopkins and T-Bone Walker are both stations on my Pandora playlist. Long live Texas blues.

LES MEADS | STOCKDALE | GUADALUPE VALLEY EC



child and learned to dance on my daddy's feet. Spent every Saturday night there while in high school.

SHERYL HENDRIX | GROESBECK
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

Your story brought back so many memories. I think my brother, sister and I were raised to the sound of polkas and waltzes in Hillje Hall. My uncles had a band, and my grandpa sold home-

brew behind the hall in the 1930s and '40s.

ROBERTA HOFBAUER | GUN BARREL CITY
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Dave Shafer's radiant photos of dancers capture grace, exuberance and joy.

CARLOS RUMBAUT | CEDAR PARK
PEDERNALES EC

Sacrifice of Immigrants

As a 20-year Army veteran and retired major, Hispanic and the son of a Mexican immigrant, I was totally impressed with *A Hero in Any Language* [March 2019]. It will impress on a lot of people the appreciation we owe the nation's immigrants for their service and sacrifices.

Unfortunately, history

has a tendency to repeat itself, and today we find our government deporting our war veterans once again. Have we forgotten that we are a nation of immigrants?

ISRAEL HINOJOSA | HEBBRONVILLE
MEDINA EC



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Texas Co-op Power

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HAPPENINGS

Magnolia Days in Columbus

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The 100-year-old live oak and magnolia trees on the courthouse square in **COLUMBUS** supply the shade, and the chamber of commerce furnishes the fun **MAY 17-18** for the town festival of **MAGNOLIA DAYS**.

A family fun zone and beer and wine gardens as well as vendors, food and live music provide activities for all ages.

Magnolia, settled in the 1820s, is along the Colorado River, about 25 miles west of downtown Houston.

INFO ► (979) 732-8385, magnoliadays.org

PHILANTHROPY

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Time and saltwater are scoring direct hits on the USS Texas, something the battleship mostly evaded during both world wars. The Texas, commissioned in 1914, is sinking where it sits docked in the Houston Ship Channel.

"Due to constant exposure to saltwater, the battleship Texas is suffering from damages and more than 300,000 gallons of water leaks each day," says Tony Gregory, chairman of the Battle-ship Texas Foundation. The foundation's Come and Save It campaign continues to gather petition signatures and collect donations in the hope of saving the ship. The petition will try to persuade state lawmakers to act on behalf of the ship.

The goal of a permanent dry dock solution could cost more than \$50 million. The effort to buoy the battleship welcomes supporters at comeandsaveit.com.

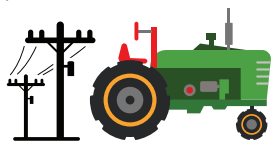
◀ LOOKING BACK AT ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY THIS MONTH



FROM THE SPREAD OF ELECTRICITY thanks to co-ops to the dawn of the fracking industry, harnessing and consuming electricity and energy have hit many milestones since 1944, the year *Texas Co-op Power* debuted.

1940s

1944 The Pace Act extends the mission of the federal Rural Electrification Administration indefinitely beyond its original 1946 expiration date.



1946 More than 50 percent of U.S. farms are electrified.

1948 WBAP in Fort Worth becomes the first TV station in Texas.

1950s

1951 Willie Wiredhand, composed of a lamp's socket head, wire arms, two-pronged plug legs and a lineworker's insulated gloves, is adopted as the official electric cooperative mascot.

1951 The first commercial color TV broadcast takes place.

1954 Bell Labs demonstrates the first practical silicon solar cell, powering a radio transmitter and toy Ferris wheel with energy from the sun.

1960s

1964 Sony develops the first VCR for home use.

1965 The Great Northeast Blackout plunges all of New York, portions of seven neighboring states and parts of eastern Canada into darkness for up to 12 hours.

1969 Beginnings of the internet.

1969 The first automated teller machine in the U.S., devised by Dallas engineer Donald Wetzel, is installed on Long Island.

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

A Butterfly's Touch

KATY HAMNER was more nervous leaving the hospital with her 10-year-old daughter, Avery Graves, than when she took her home as a newborn. A simple visit to their family doctor, which revealed Graves had Type 1 diabetes, had turned into days in the intensive care unit.

"We had nobody when she was first diagnosed—nobody to turn to," Hamner said.

Things didn't get much better when they got home. Graves had a hard time coping with a new lifestyle that included checking her blood sugar levels multiple times a day—a painful process.

So Hamner and Graves, now 12, members of Medina Electric Cooperative, started the Painless Butterfly Project, which funds painless lancing devices for children with Type 1 diabetes. They've funded and distributed 25 of the devices in the Hondo area, west of San Antonio, forming a community along the way.

"It's been really good for her," Hamner said. "When she starts getting ... kind of upset about things, we'll have a kid or doctor that calls us, and I'll be like, 'Time to go.' And it kind of brings her back: 'OK, I'm not the only one.'"

INFO ► thepainlessbutterflyproject.org

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE recognizes co-op members who improve their community's quality of life. Nominate someone at TexasCoopPower.com.



LIFESTYLES

Here Comes the Sun

May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month—a good time to think about the dangers of exposure to the sun and ways to lower your skin cancer risk.

About 90 percent of nonmelanoma skin cancers and 85 percent of melanoma cases are associated with exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer.

More than 5.4 million cases of non-melanoma skin cancer were treated in more than 3.3 million people in the U.S. in 2012, the most recent year statistics were available, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.

More people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the U.S. than all other cancers combined.

The best way to defend against the sun's harmful UV rays is to shield your skin with clothing, sunscreen and shade.

LOOKING BACK AT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEXT MONTH ►

1970s

1976 The Apple I computer is introduced.

1977 The U.S. Department of Energy is formed.

1979 The Three Mile Island nuclear accident occurs.



1980s

1980 The first U.S. wind farm opens—in New Hampshire.

1984 A power plant using tidal waves opens in Canada, the first of its kind in North America.

1986 IBM unveils the PC Convertible, the first laptop computer.

1988 South Texas Project Electric Generating Station near Matagorda becomes Texas' first nuclear power plant.

1990s



1996 The first modern electric car, General Motors' EV1, rolls off the production line.

1999 Deregulation of the electric industry takes effect in parts of the state.

2000s

2008 Hydraulic fracturing begins in the Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas.



2017 Eighteen percent of Texas' energy is generated from wind and solar power, with wind making up the majority of the state's total renewable power generation.

THIS LITTLE PIGGY

BY CHRIS BURROWS | PHOTOS BY ERIC W. POHL



When pet potbellies **outgrow expectations**, rescuers step in

The stories always seem to start the same: with a precious photo and a short conversation. Melanie Bolling's pet pig story began exactly that way.

"I saw a cute little piglet on Facebook, and I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, I need one,' " she said of when she and her husband, Stephen, added weeks-old Pearl, a miniature potbellied pig, to their family in 2015. "It just kind of snowballed from there."

Soon Bolling found an online community of Metroplex-area pet pig parents, many of whom were looking for new homes for their animals. Since the Bollings live on 10 acres in Wills Point, east of Dallas, she felt compelled to help. She took in three pigs in 2016 and another 30 in 2017. Then 90 in 2018.

That's when Bolling realized most of the stories end the same way. Miniature pigs only start out that way, often outgrowing their owners' lifestyles and expectations—sent instead to the wilds of the internet or worse. Miniature pigs, so named because they're smaller than farm pigs, which can weigh up to 500–800 pounds, comprise more than a dozen breeds and can reach 200 pounds or more.

Experts estimate 90 percent of mini pig owners end up finding new homes for their pigs in their first two years. In response, dozens of rescues have cropped up across the state.

The Bollings started one of them. My Pig Filled Life, powered by Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, is home to more than 130 pigs across three barns. It's a big commitment that's only getting bigger.

"I could take in a hundred [pigs] today and not make a dent in the amount of calls," Bolling said.

THE PROBLEM

Mitsy Wempe will be the first to tell you that she and her husband, Jason, made a mistake.

The two animal lovers were looking to share their 10-acre plot in Gilmer when they came across miniature pigs for sale in 2014.

"I saw the piglets, and I'm like 'Oh my gosh.' They were so stinkin' adorable," Wempe said. "As soon as my eyes laid upon



them, I literally was hooked to the pigs."

They brought home Abigail first. Then many other pigs followed when friends and friends of friends realized the Wempes had space and were "the pig people," she said. "So then it turned into, 'Hey, I know somebody who has a pig and doesn't want it anymore, do you want it?'"

Soon the Wempes had their first male pig. That's when they slipped.

"We thought it would be interesting—fun, cool—to bring in an unneutered male and let him get my smallest pig pregnant because, of course, we were so ignorant," Wempe said. "Because, you know, if you mate it with a small pig, you'll have small pigs, right? Of course, that's not how it works."

Instead, unbeknownst to the Wempes, Magnus bred with four of their pigs, which led to 22 piglets in 30 days. He was neutered the next weekend, and the couple founded Oinkin' Oasis, a sanctuary served by Upshur Rural EC that houses more than 90 pigs, which will live out their days there.

The Wempes weren't the first to experiment with breeding, but they're among the few to decline the easy money it can bring in. "It really opened our eyes to—we are the problem,"

Wempe said. "That's when we decided we were going to rescue."

Since the 1980s, when Canadian farmer Keith Connell brought 19 straight-tailed potbellied pigs to the U.S. from Europe, untold thousands of breeders have taken a less noble path than the Wempes, breeding miniature pigs at runaway rates. Celebrities fueled a pet pig craze in the 2000s, when Tori Spelling, Denise Richards and Paris Hilton had reality TV shows that included leashed potbellies. The animals can fetch thousands of dollars each—prices that can be inflated with false descriptors, such as "teacup" and "micro."

"I try to remind people that it is very uncommon for a healthy pig to weigh less than 80 pounds as an adult," wrote Dr. Evelyn MacKay, a veterinary resident at Texas A&M University, in an email. "Although we have all seen pictures of cute, tiny pigs on the internet, the average pet pig is usually over 100 pounds."

Over many generations, dogs have been bred to take on a range of looks and sizes. Unscrupulous miniature pig breeders have claimed similar progress over mere decades.

"They sell this micro teacup lie," Bolling said.

Some unscrupulous breeders are worse, said Dan Illescas,

Opposite: Melanie Bolling watches Rusty, one of the rescued potbellied pigs at My Pig Filled Life in Wills Point.



Mitsy Wempe interacts with P.J., one of the rescued pigs at Oinkin' Oasis in Gilmer, which she operates with her husband, Jason.

who co-founded Central Texas Pig Rescue, a member of Bluebonnet EC, in Bastrop in 2016. Some breed pigs that aren't fully

grown—to give the illusion of tiny mothers—and even advise owners to underfeed pigs to keep them small, he said. Buyers who succumb to these tactics have few options.

"If I told you to only feed it a tablespoon of food a day, and you did that and it died—it's on you," Illescas said. "You either feed the pig and it gets bigger than you wanted, or you don't feed the pig and it dies."

IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS

It was Pearl's cute features that got Bolling's attention, but it was her personality that forged a strong bond between them.

"When people reach out, I tell them my greatest need is always belly rubbers," Bolling said. "These animals are super social, and physical contact and connection is what they crave most."

According to findings published in the *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, pigs live in complex social communities. They are adept at solving mazes and other tests, have excellent long-term memories, feel a range of emotions and respond to one



another's emotional states. Some experts claim pigs can outwit dogs, but don't confuse their behavior.

As animals that live their life as prey, not predators, "pigs have different drives than dogs do," Illescas said. "I have to tell people five times that pigs aren't dogs. ... I explain it: 'I know you know that pigs aren't dogs, but what you don't know is that your brain is telling you to look for dog behavior.'"

Owners frustrated by their pigs often turn to the internet, where misinformation abounds.

"When you have this big pig, but you have this information

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to find ways to help the pig rescues featured here.



Experts estimate
90 percent
of mini pig owners end
up finding new homes
for their pigs in their
first two years.

Left: Rescued pigs love the attention and affection they get from Jason Wempe at Oinkin' Oasis.
Below: Pigs move through the grounds at Oinkin' Oasis.

much longer. They're sensitive to the weather because they can't sweat and have hair, not fur. They require special attention. That's why Bolling, who specializes in rehoming pigs, requires a rigorous process for prospective adopters.

"We have a great facility here, so if [a pig is] leaving here—and they may have been rehomed one, two, 10 times before—I need to know that it's a permanent place where they're going," she said. "I try to tell people, 'Think about the life you would have with a 3-year-old, and if you can't accommodate that life for 20 years, then don't take a pig.'"



WORTH THE WORK

A pig can change a person. Wempe stopped eating meat when pigs came into her life. A chance sighting of Wayland, one of her rescued farm pigs, through a kitchen window struck something in her.

"I literally was standing there frying up some bacon, and I just saw him and it killed me," she said. "We used to hunt. I got a rifle for Christmas one year. We were on a deer lease. We were those people."

Illescas stopped eating meat, too, and has forged a relationship with the vegan community in Austin, which helps with fundraising. CTPR spent more than \$85,000 on operations in 2017, Illescas said, before its population more than doubled. CTPR, which adopts out pigs in good health, focuses on pigs in greatest need—those with health issues that may have suffered from abuse or neglect. Veterinary students at Texas A&M benefit from caring for CTPR's pigs, which aren't always a focus of vet curricula.

"All veterinary students receive education on swine health, diseases and management practices, though this is a smaller part of the curriculum compared to dogs, cats, horses and cows," wrote MacKay, who helps care for CTPR pigs. "The focus has traditionally been on production-type swine medicine."

Mini pigs are a big commitment, a message Bolling, Illescas and Wempe hope to spread among veterinarians and the public. They're not quitting on their pigs.

"I'm a big believer in the Lord, and I felt like this was the place he was calling me to be, and it's opened so many doors," Bolling said.

Their stories won't end like the rest.

Chris Burrows is a TEC senior communications specialist.

you found on the internet that says pigs don't get big, you get kind of confused because you're not really sure what you're dealing with," Illescas said. "The truth is really mystified."

CTPR, which houses more than 250 pigs, fights misinformation with likes, shares and adorable photos. The rescue's Facebook and Instagram accounts count more than 35,000 followers, who are exposed to the realities of pet pigs. Still, it's an uphill fight, Illescas said.

"The people who have the information—us, other rescues, people who have pigs and learned the hard way—we have enough to do," he said.

Pet pig owners who do manage to find harmony at home know it's a lifestyle. Pigs can't be boarded like dogs, and they can live

TOM LEA'S WAR



Battlefield paintings by El Paso artist express the tragedy and pathos of World War II

Tom Lea—noted muralist, author and war correspondent—grew up in El Paso, spending his childhood in the shadow of the Mexican Revolution during the second decade of the 20th century. Lea, son of a prominent lawyer who served two years as El Paso mayor, enjoyed the safety of an affluent household despite the dangers posed by the revolution's proximity. Decades later, he would witness a battlefield once again and provide Americans with a realistic and compassionate view of World War II as a war correspondent and illustrator for *Life* magazine.

Lea's chronicle of the tragedies and victories of the war created perhaps his most compelling artworks. The images he produced on the battlefield captured the heartfelt emotions of conflict in real time and under duress.

"Tom Lea started the artist-correspondent program for *Life* magazine as an 'embed,' recording real battles, not just paintings from news reports," explains Adair Margo, founder of the Tom Lea Institute in El Paso, in an email. "It remained the most vivid part of his life and turned him from painting to writing. After WWII, Tom knew he needed words, not only paint, to express mankind's living and dying."

As *Life* described to readers in 1941, Lea was one of several artists whom the magazine commissioned to create "America's first gallery of defense art." The assignment was deemed a success, and soon *Life* had turned Lea into a special kind of war correspondent, traveling to the North Atlantic and South Pacific. He made sketches of what he saw. In one instance, after the ship on which he had been embedded was sunk, along with the photographic files on



Top: Tom Lea as he heads to war. **Above:** *Fighting Hornet* depicts the height of the Battle of Santa Cruz. **Opposite:** *That 2,000 Yard Stare* has become an iconic image of the effects of war on the human psyche.





Going In shows a Marine during the landing on Peleliu in 1944.

board, Lea's drawings became the only record of the engagement. "In the fall of 1941," Lea wrote, "I went to sea aboard a U.S. Navy destroyer on duty in the submarine-haunted North Atlantic, as an Accredited War Artist-Correspondent of *Life Magazine*. ... I became, for deeply felt reasons, an eye-witness reporter, in drawings and paintings, of men and their machines waging a war worldwide."

Lea's work from this period, 82 pieces in all, portrays the war at its worst and Lea's illustrative skills at their best. Unsparring in its depiction of the true human cost of battle, it expresses an understanding of tragedy and pathos that required an unflinching eye, never turning away until an image was completed.

In 2008, Texas A&M University Press published a collection of Lea's remarkable sketches and powerful paintings and his firsthand written accounts of his assignments for *Life*. Margo wrote the foreword for the book.

A collection of his work is archived at the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and it tours periodically, including an exhibition at Fredericksburg's National Museum of the Pacific War.

"Although I had seen pictures of Tom Lea's World War II work several times, I was stunned when I viewed the originals at the National Museum of the Pacific War exhibition," says retired Marine Corps Gen. Michael William Hagee, president and CEO of the Admiral Nimitz Foundation, which supports the museum. "Tom had a unique ability to bring the horror of war and the sacrifice and dedication of those who served and fought to his art. He obviously understood the fear, bravery, compassion and camaraderie of individuals on the battlefield. Having served in several conflicts, I have seen no artist that captures better the emotions

one experiences on the faces of his subjects."

Lea's creative training began at 18, with two years of formal instruction at the Art Institute of Chicago followed by a five-year apprenticeship with Chicago muralist John Norton and a period in Italy studying Renaissance frescoes. He returned to El Paso in his late 20s, an accomplished professional with a number of major works to his name.

"A singular aspect of Lea, sometimes overlooked, is the sheer versatility of his creative talents," says Victoria Ramirez, director of the El Paso Museum of Art. "Along with his prodigious output as a visual artist, he wrote novels, some of which are considered classics of Southwest literature. And in the realm of art, he was a master draftsman, illustrator and artist-reporter during World War II in addition to his substantial work in easel painting and murals."

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see more paintings and learn about the Tom Lea Trail.

Lea's considerable achievements made the founding of his namesake institute a necessity as much as an opportunity. The Tom Lea Institute, founded in 2009, is dedicated to documenting, exhibiting and sharing his works through a digital library, exhibitions and publications. The institute partners with academic foundations statewide that archive Lea's work, including the El Paso Museum of Art, the University of Texas at El Paso and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The institute was also a key component to realizing its director's personal vision.

"In founding the Tom Lea Institute," Margo explains, "I've found joy in sharing a person and a place that I love." Texans who love history and art will no doubt appreciate her efforts.

Photographer, author and artist **E. Dan Klepper** lives in Marathon.



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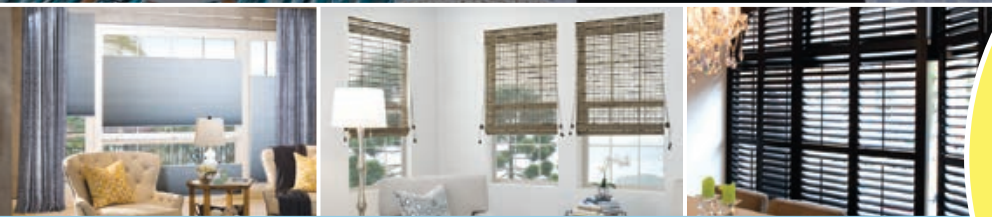
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Dear Darryl

I tried the store bought, so called, Septic treatments out there, and they did Nothing to clear up my problem. Is there anything on the market I can pour or flush into my system that will restore it to normal, and keep it maintained?

DEAR CLOGGED AND SMELLY: As a reader of my column, I am sure you are aware that I have a great deal of experience in this particular field. You will be glad to know that there IS a septic solution that will solve your back-up and effectively restore your entire system from interior piping throughout the septic system and even unclog the drain field as well. **SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs** deliver your system the fast active bacteria and enzymes needed to liquefy solid waste and free the clogs causing your back-up.

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SeptiCleanse® Shock and Maintenance Programs are designed to work on any septic system regardless of design or age. From modern day systems to sand mounds, and systems installed generations ago, I have personally seen SeptiCleanse unclog and restore these systems in a matter of weeks. I highly recommend that you try it before spending any money on repairs. SeptiCleanse products are available online at **www.septicleanse.com** or you can order or learn more by calling **toll free at 1-888-899-8345**. If you use the promo code **"TXS8"**, you can get a free shock treatment, added to your order, which normally costs \$169. So, make sure you use that code when you call or buy online.

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Why Electricity Is Dangerous

HAVE YOU EVER WALKED ACROSS CARPET AND RECEIVED A shock when you touched a doorknob or another person? What you felt was a buildup of static electricity.

But a real electric shock is a lot more painful and can be deadly. Here's what can happen:

- ▶ Muscles tighten up, making it almost impossible to pull away from the circuit.
- ▶ Lungs constrict, making it hard to breathe.
- ▶ Heartbeat is interrupted and blood vessels narrow.
- ▶ Burns and internal organ damage occur.
- ▶ Death may follow.

It sounds scary—and it is—but if you remember some simple safety rules, you can use electricity without getting hurt.

Humans Are Good Conductors

The human body is a good conductor of electricity. That means electricity flows easily through our bodies. Why? Because electricity moves quickly through water—and the human body is 70 percent water.

Another fact to remember is that electricity always tries to

find the easiest path to the ground—so don't get in its way. Maintain safe distances from electric lines at all times. Avoid using ladders, poles or other tools in situations where they may come into contact with overhead lines. Contact your electric cooperative if you need to work near power lines.

Accidents Happen Quickly

You might think that if you get shocked, you can pull away quickly and not get hurt. Electricity travels at nearly the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, so the effects of electricity can be felt immediately. A person has almost no chance of avoiding the shock.

If the electricity is strong enough, muscles tighten so much that a person can't let go.

Anyone who touches someone who is being shocked can become part of the circuit, too. That's why you should never grab anyone who's been shocked. If an electrical accident happens, turn off or unplug the circuit if it's safe to do so, call 911 and tell the operator that someone has been involved in an electrical accident, and keep others away until trained help arrives.



ELECTRICITY SAFETY RULES

1. **Look up and look out for power lines** before you raise a ladder, climb onto a roof or climb a tree. Stay at least 35 feet away from overhead power lines.
2. **Don't ever play or work on or near** a green transformer box or climb the fence around an electrical substation.
3. **Keep electrical equipment away from water.** Most electrical accidents around the house happen when people use electricity near water.
4. **Don't plug a bunch of devices** into one outlet or extension cord. It could damage the electrical system in your house or even cause a fire.
5. **Make sure all electrical cords** are tucked out of the way to avoid a tripping hazard and to keep pets or small children away from them.
6. **Don't yank an electrical cord** from the wall. Instead, pull from the plug. Pulling on a cord can damage the appliance, the plug or the outlet.
7. **Don't fly drones or kites** near power lines or substations. A kite and its string may conduct electricity—sending it right through you to the ground.
8. **Install tamper-resistant receptacles.** Not only will it help keep kids safe, but covering outlets will also help save energy by stopping cold drafts.
9. **Make sure all electric appliances and tools** are in good repair.
10. **Don't use extension cords** for long-term electrical needs. They are intended for temporary use only.



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Use Caution Near Co-op Equipment

AS YOU FIND YOURSELF SPENDING MORE TIME OUTDOORS THIS SUMMER, EXERCISE caution near power lines and other electrical equipment maintained by your electric cooperative.

Substations and power lines carry extremely high voltage, and if contact is accidentally made, the results can be dangerous—or even deadly.

Never climb trees near power lines. If you make contact with a tree that is touching a power line, your body could become a path for electricity, from the line to the ground. If you encounter an animal trapped in a tree near power lines or inside a substation, do not attempt to remove it—no matter how furry and cute! Call your co-op for assistance.

If there are underground lines in your area, you'll notice big green boxes on the ground that hold our equipment. It's important that landscaping and other barriers be kept clear of these padmount transformers. Co-op technicians need at least 10 feet of clearance around the equipment to be able to safely access them when needed.

Padmount transformers are connected to primary high-voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend in several directions to distribute power to homes and businesses. That's why it's important to call 811 before planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems or digging where it might damage underground lines.

These days, we are seeing more remote-controlled devices, like drones and other aircraft, which can be a great way to have fun outdoors. But these gadgets also bring new safety concerns. Never fly them near power lines, substations or other electrical equipment.

Remember these safety tips when flying a drone:

- ▶ Keep a safe distance from electrical equipment when you fly. If contact is accidentally made with a power line or a transformer inside a substation, many members of your community could be left without electricity.
- ▶ Keep the drone in your sight at all times.
- ▶ Avoid flying if weather conditions are unfavorable. High winds could cause you to lose control of the drone.

Your safety is important to us. We hope you will share the message of electrical safety so that you and others can enjoy plenty of summer days filled with fun!

Maximize Your Fuel Efficiency

MAY IS NATIONAL BIKE MONTH, WHICH includes Bike to Work Day. While commuting by bicycle is a great, healthy option for those who can swing it, it's often not a workable arrangement. For those of us who must drive to work—or for anyone who drives, period—here are a few ways to increase your vehicle's fuel efficiency that don't require buying a new car.

▶ **Drive politely.** Aggressive driving maneuvers like rapid acceleration and sudden braking negatively impact your gas mileage by 10 to 40 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

▶ **Obey the speed limit.** Not only is this notion just plain safer, fuel economy decreases rapidly at speeds of more than 50 mph. Every 5 mph driven over 50 mph is roughly equivalent to paying an additional 16 cents per gallon of gas.

▶ **Avoid hauling cargo on your car's roof.** A large rooftop box increases wind resistance and reduces fuel economy. If you must use an external cargo holder, opt for a rear-mount cargo box or tray for a smaller dip in fuel efficiency.

▶ **Avoid unnecessary idling.** If your vehicle is parked, turn off the engine. Depending on your car's engine size and air conditioner use, idling can waste a quarter- to a half-gallon of fuel per hour.



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Instant Archives

The Portal to Texas History makes a wealth of research and documents available online

BY LIGHT T. CUMMINS

A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN YOAKUM sits at a laptop researching a term paper for his history class. He reads about the great Texas cattle drives and examines maps of the trails to market towns in Kansas. A world away, an English-speaking reporter sits at a computer in a Yokohama newsroom, researching background about Lyndon B. Johnson to be included in an article about Texas politics for her readers in Japan.

The student and the reporter, more than 6,000 miles apart, are using a website known as the Portal to Texas History.

The free website contains nearly 12 million digitized historical documents for research. In 2002, University of North Texas librarian Cathy Hartman realized the impact digitization could have on traditional libraries and their paper materials. “Our goal,” she says, “was to create a technical infrastructure to preserve digital copies of Texas history materials and provide free access to the materials for everyone.” She set about securing a series of grants that funded the project.

By 2004, the initial set of digitized resources were online. Four years later, the National Endowment for the Humanities named the portal one of the best research sites on the internet. By 2010, it had 100 partners providing materials for digitization. UNT maintains the massive online collection.

Its contents span the pre-Columbian era to recent occurrences—for every geographical area of Texas. Each document on the portal is indexed and searchable.

Hartman, now retired dean of libraries

at UNT, explains the portal works with more than 400 partners around Texas, including libraries, museums, archives and private collectors, to share collections online. The portal currently receives about 1 million unique visits each month. People come back to it because there is always something new to discover.

“It is exciting,” she says, “to hear from genealogists who use the portal to track family history or from teachers who use it as a resource in their class.” Hartman says she has no favorite section but browses the collections regularly.

The portal has greatly assisted my writing about Texas history. My bibliographical book *Discovering Texas History* required examining hundreds of items. I accomplished this task during a week’s work on the portal, something that otherwise would have required well over a month of walking among shelves of several libraries.

My recent biography, *Allie Victoria Tennant and the Visual Arts in Dallas*, could have demanded my visiting several dozen archives. There I would have searched through thousands of unindexed paper items, turning page after page for many weeks, only intermittently finding the information I needed. Instead, a few days’ work in the portal enabled me to efficiently locate more than 1,500 documents, which I saved to my computer. The portal made that book a manageable research project in terms of expending my time and efforts.

In my travels while serving as the state historian of Texas, I talked with many other historians and all agree on the portal’s value. “It is accessible, easy to use



WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see more archival photos.

and contains the most diverse collection of Texana imaginable,” said Deborah Liles, history professor at Tarleton State University in Stephenville.

The portal provides one-stop shopping for students, teachers, journalists, genealogists, writers or anyone with a general interest in Texas history.

New materials enter the archive constantly, contributed by many repositories throughout Texas. Libraries, archives and museums regularly loan paper items from their holdings. These include letters, newspapers, journals, public documents, manuscripts, school yearbooks, magazines, photographs and other historical materials. The staff at the portal digitizes these items, applies software to make each one searchable by computer and then adds them to the online collection. Once each item is digitized, the paper original is returned to its

owner. The portal grows more useful as documents are added and digitization technology advances.

The portal puts Texas history at the fingertips of every teacher and student in the state, from the smallest elementary school to the largest university. This has been my experience teaching at Austin College in Sherman. Over the years, hundreds of my students have written term papers along with a number of advanced theses based on their research in the portal. The portal also contains thousands of historical photographs that illustrate Texas history. I regularly enhance my class presentations by projecting images of key documents and images for student discussion.

Simply put, the Portal to Texas History has changed the researching, writing and teaching of history about our state.

Light T. Cummins served as state historian of Texas 2009-12 and is a professor emeritus at Austin College.

Members of a Chicago and Rock Island Railroad survey crew, which worked a 10-mile stretch between Dallas and Fort Worth, circa 1902.

Russian Interference

Tumbleweeds—stray pests from Siberia and icons of loneliness—sometimes gang up on civilization

BY E. DAN KLEPPER

THE WINTER TRAFFIC JAM ALONG U.S. Highway 67, the blacktop spanning Big Bend country between Marfa and the border town of Presidio, surprised everyone. Deputy sheriffs lined the roadway, slowing vehicles to a crawl before moving them forward one at a time. Dozens of pickups and SUVs waited their turn, causing a temporary delay for cowboys, tourists and laborers. Backups, rare on this isolated stretch of road where sweeping grasslands rise toward the Chinati Mountains, are usually caused by a wayward cow.

This time, the culprit was a herd of tumbleweeds blown loose from a fence line, impeding drivers' views and rolling willy-nilly up and down the highway.

In another disruption that occurred in the past century, the tumbleweed escaped its humble origins as a nuisance weed and evolved into an allegorical icon of frontier mythology, representing the loner, the drifter and the rambling spirit. The weed's rise in status can be attributed to its nomadic movements that represent the ambition to wander. Its motion seems to be driven by a supernatural force as it appears and vanishes in the most isolated and unlikely places, inspiring some folks to call it a "windwitch." It embodies the magical and the mundane, as common as a dandelion yet representing our desire to be free.

Tumbleweeds and Texas go hand in hand, especially in the western half of the state, where they thrive along roadsides. The plants love disturbed, loosened soil in vacant lots, fallow agricultural fields and railroad sidings. Seeds require only

the slightest bit of water to germinate and can send a taproot down to subsurface moisture in 12 hours. Heat tolerant and fast growing, tumblers are bushy, spiny weeds that have been known to reach more than 6 feet in diameter. They dry out in the fall before detaching from the soil surface and, propelled by the wind, roll across the countryside scattering seeds.

In West Texas, this journey typically ends at a fence line, where hundreds of wayward tumbleweeds might gather for the winter. The weeds remain there, piled in rows, until a change in the wind and weather sends them all at once on their way again. The spontaneous migration can be impressive, creating sudden and sizable disruptions, such as the U.S. 67 traffic jam. Massive tumbleweed movements can even surround homes and barns, creating a fire hazard or impeding access like flood debris sent adrift and then lodged against itself in the wake of a hurricane.

As a member of the goosefoot family, the Texas tumbleweed is actually a Russian thistle, introduced to America in 1873 by contaminated flaxseed. Russian immigrants settling in South Dakota brought flax with them, unwittingly casting tumbleweed seeds into the soil as well. The Siberian native, capable of producing around a quarter-million seeds per plant, was originally dispersed by wind, railroad livestock cars and farming operations, including threshers and their traveling crews.

Before long, tumbleweeds could be found throughout the settled frontier. Hardy, invasive and drought-resistant,



**A tumbleweed
along a fence line
in West Texas.**

tumbleweeds quickly earned a reputation as an agricultural pest. “Tumbleweeds may be pesky, but cows love ‘em,” says William Holt Jowell, a retired Midland cattleman. “I used to raise Texas registered long-horns, and they would clear a pasture of young tumbleweed sprouts in short order, making livestock the best defense against the weed. But as soon as I moved the cattle out of the pasture, guess who’s back: tumbleweeds.”

As the tumbleweed’s notoriety advanced, so did its stature in the zeitgeist of the American West. The bundle of twigs was immortalized early in the 20th century by the Sons of the Pioneers, a western singing group with its own century-spanning legacy. Although the lineup

has changed since their debut in 1933, the Pioneers continue to sing the western classic *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*. “See them tumbling down, pledging their love to the ground,” the song begins. “Lonely but free, I’ll be found drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds.”

The weed’s celebrity doesn’t end with a song. Tumbleweeds have appeared as character “actors” in films and on television, including appearances in dozens of classic and contemporary Westerns, commercials and cartoons. They often have been employed to suggest emptiness, making a tumbling sphere of thistle one of the most recognizable cultural symbols of isolation. The metaphor is at odds with the truth, considering that the tumbleweed is now one of the country’s most common weeds.

WEB EXTRAS

► Read this story on our website to see more tumbleweed photos.

The U.S. 67 traffic jam eventually cleared up, thanks in part to the steadfast direction of law enforcement and collaborating

drivers. The tumbleweeds cooperated as well, pausing in their migration as the wind subsided, vacating the blacktop to gather in roadside ditches or up against another fence line. The cessation would hold, at least as long as the weather did, before the wind began to stir the grasslands, signaling a change in the air, turning the windmill blades before sending the tumbleweeds tumbling once again toward the horizon, aimless and carefree.

E. Dan Klepper is a photographer, author and artist who lives in Marathon.

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Go to TexasCoopPower.com for details and official rules.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com. Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Sweet or Savory, on each recipe. Mail entries to: *Texas Co-op Power/Holiday Recipe Contest*, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can also fax entries to (512) 763-3401. Up to three total entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries all can be sent in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit TexasCoopPower.com. **Entry deadline: June 10, 2019.**



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Texas Co-op Power, February 2017

WYATT MCPHADEN

POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

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Email your nomination to people@texascooppower.com.

Include name, co-op affiliation and a short description of their work in the community.

We'll highlight select nominees in a future issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Urgent: Special Summer Driving Notice

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can... do you know how to protect yourself?

The sun rises and sets at peak travel periods, during the early morning and afternoon rush hours and many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle, the pavement, or even from waxed and oily windshields that can make matters worse. Early morning dew can exacerbate this situation. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light. This superior lens



Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

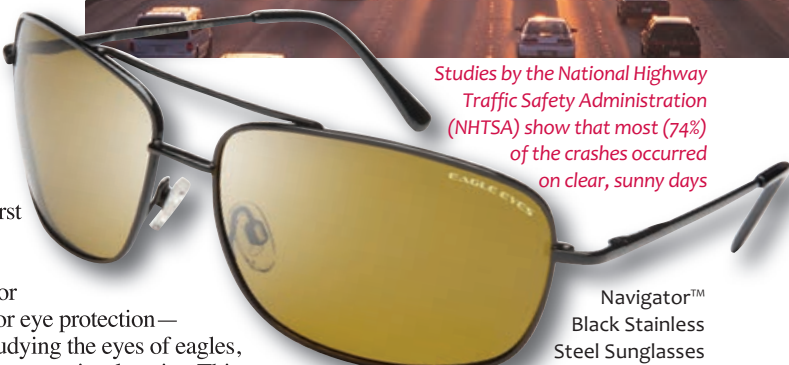
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Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



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HIGH-CAPACITY PRO MOWER DECK stamped from a single sheet of 9-gauge steel with commercial grade reinforcements for added strength and durability

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THE NEW JOHN DEERE Z700 SERIES ZTRAK™ zero-turn mowers bring heavy-duty construction and comfort to the residential market. Five models, including the Z720E, Z735E, Z730M, Z735M and Z740R, offer homeowners a durable solution that will stand up to the demands of mowing larger properties while enhancing operator comfort.

Featuring **23 TO 25 HORSEPOWER** (17.2 to 18.6 kW) engines and a heavy-duty frame, the Z700 Series mowers provide homeowners with the power, performance and durability that is needed when maintaining Texas-sized properties. Additionally, a large fuel tank maximizes your mowing day.

The integrated park brake allows the operator to audibly hear the brake click into place. The brake automatically engages when steering levers are moved outwards, and disengages when the levers are pulled together, allowing the operator to quickly start and stop work in a natural motion.

The Z700 Series machines are equipped with a **HIGH-CAPACITY PRO MOWER DECK** in one of three sizes: 48-, 54- and 60-inch. The mower deck is stamped from a single sheet of nine-gauge steel with commercial grade reinforcements for added strength and durability. The cutting height adjustment system with transport lock allows operators to adjust the cutting height with the turn of a dial, and then quickly return to the desired cutting height after lifting the deck for transport.

Operator comfort is also at the forefront of the Z700 design, which includes an adjustable, three-position foot platform and high-back seat. The three-position foot platform is designed so operators can move it forward and back for a comfortable position, regardless of their height.

Additionally, the Z730M and Z735M models are equipped with the ComfortGlide system, an industry-first. The ComfortGlide™ suspension actually moves with you, travelling 3-inches fore and aft to absorb bumps for enhanced ride quality.

► Z740R - ZTrak™ Zero Turn Mower

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Baylor, the Man

Judge and minister is an unlikely namesake for the Baptist university in Waco

BY MARTHA DEERING

EVEN THOUGH THE NAME BAYLOR HAS been prominent in Texas higher education for 174 years, Judge R.E.B. Baylor's name was attached to the university only as the result of a quirky legislative process. Legislation to charter a Baptist university bore two other names before Baylor's was substituted.

In 1844, the Texas Baptist Educational Society directed Baylor, the Rev. William M. Tryon and J.G. Thomas to petition the Congress of the Republic of Texas to charter a Baptist university. The society first named the institution San Jacinto University, then Milam University, eventually deciding the university should bear the name of a prominent Baptist. Baylor's name was chosen because he had authored the legislation.

Robert Emmett Bledsoe Baylor was born in Lincoln County, Kentucky, in 1793. His father served as a captain in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Although he attended schools around Paris, Kentucky, the younger Baylor was largely self-taught. He followed in his father's footsteps as a 19-year-old and joined the state militia during the War of 1812, taking up arms again in the Second Creek War in Alabama in 1836. As late as 1840, he rode into battle near San Antonio following the Council House Fight, after peace negotiations between Anglos and Comanches broke down.

In *History Along the Way*, Dan K. Utey wrote, "Baylor studied law in the Lexington office of his distinguished uncle, Jesse Bledsoe—who saw service in both the U.S. Senate and the Kentucky House of Representatives—passed the bar exam and opened his own office while in his early twenties."

Baylor served one year as a Kentucky state representative in 1819 before resigning



Pompeo Coppini's statue of Judge R.E.B. Baylor after its unveiling at the Founders Day dedication at Baylor University in 1939.

the position and moving to Alabama. Period accounts suggest the sudden move was motivated by grief after the death of his fiancée in a riding accident.

As a lawyer in Tuscaloosa, Baylor returned to politics and won election to the U.S. House of Representatives. He moved to Selma and then Mobile and in the summer of 1839, attended a revival at the Baptist church in Talladega led by his cousin, the Rev. Thomas Chilton. Baylor decided he needed to be saved. "Also a lawyer and former politician," according to Utey, "Chilton was a close colleague of David Crockett and enjoyed additional success as a minister. Baylor, viewed by various historians as a deist, Unitarian, atheist, infidel or agnostic, converted to Christianity while attending the revival." Not long afterward, the Talladega Baptist Church ordained him as a minister.

In 1839, Baylor moved to La Grange, where at the urging of preacher Z.N. Morrell, he became a crusading frontier clergyman. Serving as a justice of the Third Judicial Court of the Republic of Texas,

Baylor, with gun at hand, held court proceedings during the day, and in the evening, he preached and organized churches. He saw no conflict in this arrangement, although once during a sermon, he became overexcited and referred to his parishioners as "gentlemen of the jury." Baylor's charismatic sermons and keen intellect often moved his audiences to laughter or tears.

Baylor served as a trustee of Baylor University at its first location in Independence and taught law classes. He retired from the bench in the 1860s and lived out the remainder of his life in the nearby Gay Hill community. He died in 1873 and was buried on university grounds.

By the 1880s, Baylor University had outgrown its Independence site and merged with the all-male Waco University, and a women's school was established in Belton as Baylor Female College—now the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Judge Baylor's remains were moved to Belton, but a fire in the administration building near his second grave forced another move. His third grave, covered by a simple marble slab, lies near the chapel at Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Martha Deering, a member of Heart of Texas EC, lives near McGregor.

Government Melts Over 270 Million Silver Dollars

But collectors get an unexpected second chance

It's a *crime*.

Most Americans living today have never held a hefty, gleaming U.S. silver dollar in their hands.

Where did they go? Well, in 1918, to provide aid to the British during WWI, the U.S. government melted down nearly half of the entire mintage—over 270 million silver dollars. If all those missing silver dollars could be stacked, they would tower over 400 miles into the sky! If laid in a chain, they would span 6,400 miles—enough to stretch from New York to Los Angeles more than 2½ times!

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Lady Liberty takes a Final Bow

Just three years after the massive meltdown, the government gave the Morgan Silver Dollar a final chance to shine. In 1921, facing a serious shortage, the mint struck Morgan Silver Dollars for one more brief, historic year. Today, the last-ever 1921 Morgan Silver Dollar belongs in the hands of collectors, history buffs, or anyone who values the artistry and legacy of this American classic.

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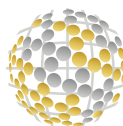
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Layer Cakes

THE 1970S USHERED IN SLOW COOKERS, microwave cooking, fondue parties and a spotlight on wholesome foods like granola, whole grains and sunflower seeds. Cakes made with carrots, pineapple and other fruits also amassed a fan base. Coated in butter rum frosting, the following three-tiered Cider 'n' Spice Cake appeared in *Texas Co-op Power* in October 1977. Apple cider gives the cake a moist texture, while homey spices will remind you of autumn baking. For richer flavor, substitute dark rum for rum extract, or light molasses for the dark corn syrup.

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

Cider 'n' Spice Cake

CAKE

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened
- 1½ cups firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup apple cider
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

FROSTING

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 4 cups powdered sugar (approximately)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dark corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons rum extract
- Walnut halves (optional)

1. CAKE: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease three 8-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with waxed paper or parchment.

2. Cream the butter and sugar. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Sift together dry ingredients, and combine the cider and milk. Alternating with the cider mixture, blend dry ingredients

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Retro Recipes

Layer Cakes



THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

ROSE M. DAILEY | HOUSTON COUNTY EC

"My family fondly refers to things I make as 'MeMa's throw-togethers,'" Dailey says. "I rarely ever go by a recipe, and if I do, it's usually three or four recipes that I have broken apart and put back together my way." For this cake, she wanted bold chocolate flavor and rich chocolate frosting. The decadent result is a staple for Dailey family birthdays. "We are a family of chocoholics," she confesses.

Triple Chocolate Cake With Chocolate Fudge Buttercream Frosting

CAKE

- 2 ounces Baker's German's sweet chocolate
- 2 ounces Baker's semisweet chocolate
- ½ cup strong black coffee
- 2 cups flour
- ⅓ cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk

FROSTING

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 2 ounces Baker's semisweet chocolate
- ½ cup shortening
- ⅓ cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 pounds powdered sugar
- 1 cup milk, or more as needed



\$100 Recipe Contest

October's recipe contest topic is **Company Dinner**. Company is coming, and this is your moment to shine. What will you serve? The deadline is **May 10**. Readers whose recipes are featured will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

ENTER ONLINE at TexasCoopPower.com/contests; MAIL to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; FAX to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.

1. CAKE: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease three 9-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with waxed paper or parchment. Microwave chocolate and coffee in large microwave-safe bowl on high 1½–2 minutes or until chocolate is almost melted, stirring after 1 minute. Stir until chocolate is completely melted.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt; set aside. Beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Blend in the melted chocolate and vanilla. Add flour mixture alternately with the buttermilk, beating well after each addition. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites on high speed until stiff peaks form, then gently fold the whites into the batter.

3. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans and bake 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cakes comes out clean. Immediately run a small metal spatula around the edges of cake layers in pans. Cool in pans on wire racks 15 minutes, then invert layers from pans. Cool cake layers completely.

4. FROSTING: Melt the butter and chocolate in microwave. Add the shortening, cocoa and vanilla. Stir until shortening is also melted. Add the powdered sugar a little at a time, alternating with the milk (about ¼ cup at a time of milk). Whisk well until you have a smooth, spreadable consistency. You might need a little more milk (if so, add a tablespoon at a time). The frosting should be firm and hold its form. ▶ Serves 8–10.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

into the creamed mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture.

3. Divide the batter between the three prepared cake pans. Bake 25–30 minutes, or until a tester inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes on wire racks before inverting the pans to remove the cakes. Cool completely before frosting.

4. FROSTING: Cream the butter. Alternately add the sugar and syrup, beating well after each addition. Beat in rum extract. Add more sugar as necessary for desired consistency.

5. To assemble the cake, place the bottom layer on a serving platter and spread an even layer of frosting over the top. Repeat with the remaining layers, and finish by frosting the top of the cake (or cover the entire cake with frosting, if you prefer). Garnish with walnuts, as desired. ▶ Serves 6–8.

Cream Cheese Berry Cake

ARLEEN ACTON | PEDERNALES EC

Featuring a rich cream cheese and mascarpone frosting, this cake is a great way to showcase fresh, Texas-grown strawberries and blueberries.

CAKE

- 2½ cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup whole milk
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup water

FILLING

- 2 cups berries (strawberries, blueberries and raspberries), divided use
- 3 tablespoons water
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch

FROSTING

- 2½ cups heavy whipping cream
- 1¾ cups powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 8 ounces mascarpone cheese, softened

1. CAKE: Preheat oven to 350 degrees and apply cooking spray to three 8-inch round

baking pans. Line the bottom of each pan with waxed paper or parchment.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. In a mixing bowl, combine the milk, oil, vanilla and eggs, then using an electric mixer, beat on low speed while adding the dry ingredients until mixed thoroughly. Then slowly add water until just combined.

3. Divide the batter into three pans and bake 25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs. Remove from oven and cool cakes in pans about 5 minutes. Invert cakes from pans and cool completely on wire racks.

4. FILLING: Add 1½ cups of mixed berries and 3 tablespoons of water to a food processor and purée until smooth. Combine the sugar and cornstarch in a saucepan. Stir in the berry purée and cook over medium heat until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and cool briefly, then transfer to a bowl and refrigerate until completely cool. Can be made up to two days in advance.

5. FROSTING: Combine whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla in a large bowl, and whip on high speed until soft peaks form. Add the softened cheeses and whip until stiff peaks form again.

6. To assemble the cake, pipe a dam of frosting around the outer edge of the first layer and top with an even layer of half of the berry filling. Gently spread a layer of frosting over the top of the berries. Add another cake layer and repeat. Top with the third cake layer and frost the entire cake with the remaining icing. Top with ½ cup of fresh berries and refrigerate until ready to serve.

► Serves 6–8.

COOK'S TIP If you can't find mascarpone cheese, use 16 ounces of cream cheese instead.

Jennie's Blackout Icebox Cake

MELISSA TURLEY | BANDERA EC

Turley says the cake is moist and dense, which makes for easy slicing and a beautiful presentation.

CAKE

- 2 cups sugar
- 1¾ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ cup baking cocoa
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- 2½ teaspoons vanilla
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons boiling water

FROSTING

- ¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened
- 1 cup baking cocoa
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ¼ cup sweetened condensed milk

1. CAKE: Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans.

2. Whisk together the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk together the wet ingredients (minus boiling water) in a container with a pour spout. Whisk wet ingredients into dry, combining well. Slowly whisk in the boiling water until

the mixture is combined.

3. Divide the batter among the prepared pans. Bake 25–30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool cakes completely in pans on wire rack.

4. FROSTING: Beat the softened butter and cocoa together until smooth and creamy. Slowly add the powdered sugar and evaporated milk, alternating small amounts of each until the mixture is combined and smooth. Stir in the vanilla and sweetened condensed milk.

5. Invert layers from pans. Place the first layer on a serving plate and frost with one-third of the frosting. Top with second layer and frost the top and sides of cake with remaining frosting. Refrigerate the cake at least 1 hour (or up to a day in advance) before serving. ► Serves 8.

COOK'S TIP If you're not up to a layer cake, feel free to divide the batter between two greased 9-by-5-inch loaf pans for a chocolate "snack" cake, freezing the other loaf for another time.

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Singin' those campfire songs. Whoa, I should've been a cowboy."
—Should've Been a Cowboy by Toby Keith*

GRACE ARSIAGA

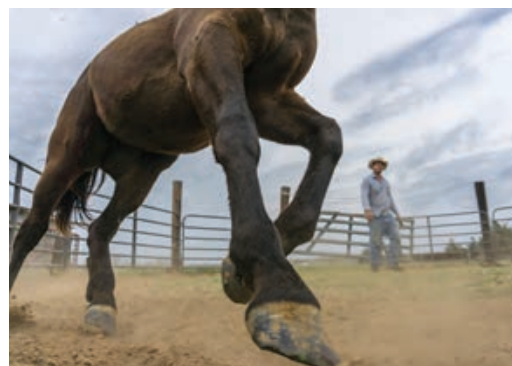
▲ **NANCY WEBSTER**, Bluebonnet EC: "I tried to get a photo of a cow's silhouette against the rising sun, but the cow got curious when I squatted down."

WEB EXTRAS ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



▲ **RYAN BRANCH**, Big Country EC: "Cattle drive on the Branch JS Ranches."

▼ **JERALYN NOVAK**, Karnes EC: For over 100 years, the Huebner Brothers Cattle Company has been driving cattle from their winter pastures on the 30-mile Matagorda peninsula to their summer pastures south of Bay City.



▲ **JENNIFER TUGGLE**, PenTex Energy: "My husband, Sam, was starting the 2-year-olds in the round pen."

▼ **BOBBY NORRIS**, Pedernales EC: "Big hat and rope with this black-and-white silhouette of a cowboy at work."



UPCOMING CONTESTS

SEPTEMBER	TEXAS VACATION	DUE MAY 10
OCTOBER	GIVING BACK	DUE JUNE 10
NOVEMBER	UP THE CREEK	DUE JULY 10

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

ONLINE: Submit highest-resolution digital images at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.
MAIL: Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that *Texas Co-op Power* cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.

Pick of the Month Whimsy & Wonder

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Downtown businesses transform into art galleries hosting works from local artists as well as live art demonstrations and live music. Main Street features performers, stilt walkers and local artisans. Check out sidewalk chalk artists and Austin's Scott Wade, the dirty car artist.



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(512) 444-7199, bgcaustin.org

9

San Antonio Motherhood Luncheon,
(210) 607-9720, texanscan.org

10

Coolidge [10-11] Mesquite Tree Festival,
(254) 747-1348

**Georgetown [10-11] Austin Square and
Round Dance Association Mid-Tex Festival,**
(830) 672-7384, asrda.org

**Levelland [10-11] Llano Estacado Rabbit
Breeders Association Show,** (806) 786-2297,
llerba.bravehost.com

Paris [10-11] Eiffel in Love With Quilts,
(903) 784-2501, parisquiltshow.com

11

Bonham Red River Art, Wine & Music Fest,
(903) 640-2196, creativeartscenterbonham.com



May 10-11

**Levelland
Llano Estacado Rabbit
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Mineola Metric 100 Bicycle Ride,
(903) 569-2801, mineolametric100.org

Wimberley Garden Tour, (512) 636-0974,
wimberleygardenclub.org

17

Columbus [17-18] Magnolia Days Festival,
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AROUND TEXAS

EVENT CALENDAR

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Mesquite [17-18] Mesquite Meander, (972) 216-6468, historicismesquite.org

Star [17-19] Cowpokes for Kids Trail Ride, (325) 437-1852, cowpokesforkids.com

18

Concan Tippy Crawdad Golf Tournament, (830) 232-4471, visitvaldecountry.com

Fredericksburg Hill Country Antique Tractor & Engine Club Tractor Show, (830) 889-0070, rustyiron.org

Lorena M. Denton Stanford Masonic Lodge 594 Car Show, (254) 855-3722

Tyler Smith County Master Gardeners Home Garden Tour, (903) 590-2980, txmg.org/smith

24

Palestine [24-26] Celebration of Steam at Texas State Railroad, 1-855-632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

Jacksonville [24-27] Memorial Mudbug, (903) 724-4100, riverrunpark.com

25

Columbus Country Market, (979) 732-8385, columbusfmtx.org

Hunt Crider's Rodeo and Dancehall Opening Night, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

New Braunfels Antique Barn Sale and Market, (830) 832-9699, newbraunfelsconservation.org

Kerrville [25-26] Festival of the Arts, (830) 895-7962, kvtartfest.com

Port Arthur [25-26] Memorial Classic Fishing Tournament, (409) 626-2501, saltclub.net



May 24-27
Jacksonville
Memorial Mudbug

31

Stephenville [31-June 1] Moo-La Fest, (254) 552-1222, visitstephenville.com

June

1

Grand Prairie Crawfish Boil, (972) 237-8100, grandfunqp.com

Waxahachie Pancake Breakfast Fly-In, (469) 309-4045, waxahachiecvb.com

6

Columbus Coastal Conservation Association Live Oak Chapter Banquet, (979) 732-1352, ccatexas.org/find-your-chapter/live-oak

7

Amarillo [7-8] Coors Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo, (806) 376-7767, coorsranchrodeo.com

Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event online for July by May 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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Higher Education

An inspiring desk perched on Hancock Hill overlooks Sul Ross State University in Alpine

EVEN THOUGH LOTS OF Texas universities have grandiose lecture halls, only one can boast a classroom with a 20-mile view. And this learning experience gives new meaning to the phrase higher education.

You'll find Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

Founded in 1917, the school of 2,000 students was named for Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross, the 19th Texas governor. Alpine is a charming burg an hour north of Big Bend National Park, and its average summer temperature sits comfortably in the mid-80s.

Sul Ross' 93-acre campus boasts beautiful buildings and the incredible Museum of the Big Bend. The classroom that achieves new heights is Hancock Hill, and hiking up to it is a student tradition going back to 1981, when some industrial tech students, led by Jim Kitchen, decided they needed a better place to study than their drab dorm room. So they grabbed a full-sized teacher's desk, threw it onto their strapping young backs and began hiking up the hill behind their dormitory. After about a mile, they found the perfect spot and planted the desk. It wasn't long before they were spending most, if not all, of their study time on top of Hancock Hill.

One day, Kitchen left a notebook in the desk, and the next time he returned, he discovered that another student had written deep thoughts and life ponderings on

its pages. He added his own and left the notebook. Slowly, the tradition and lore of the desk began to grow.

While I am not a Sul Ross Lobo, even I was tempted with the idea of climbing Hancock Hill and seeing what education it might bring. So early one morning, I set out for an adventure. After a good bit of searching, I found the unmarked trailhead at the back of the Industrial Technology Building parking lot. And so the journey began.

It wasn't long before the views became truly exceptional as I looked down upon the campus and Alpine below. As the trail climbed higher, the wide-open Texas skies helped my mind to open, too. I didn't have any fellow students that day, save for a jack rabbit and a race runner lizard.

I wasn't sure how long my outdoor study time would be. I'd heard that the hike takes anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour. After about 45 minutes hiking at a good pace, I didn't feel any closer to the desk than when I had begun, and I debated turning back. Suddenly, a dead tree full of rusted bikes caught my attention. A sign of

Chet Garner studies the scenery from atop Hancock Hill.

student life? Sure enough, over the next hill was the desk, complete with

the incredible view. Not only was I happy for a place to sit down, but the seemingly endless view immediately inspired my thoughts. "Wow, Texas is beautiful. I wonder what it looks like atop those other peaks. Why didn't I go to Sul Ross?"

I opened the desk drawers and sure enough found a journal full of student scribbles. I also found a book titled *Course in Mathematical Analysis Vol. 1*. The title made my brain hurt, so I immediately put it back inside. I did, however, take out my pen and leave my own musings in the journal. What did I write? You'll have to hike up the hill to find out. I even saved you some room right below mine. Just make sure you take a pen.

Chet Garner shares his Texplorations as the host of *The Daytripper* on PBS.

WEB EXTRAS ▶ Read this story on our website to see Chet's video showing sweeping views of the Alpine area.





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